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Obstacles In The Path Of Reaching Allah

KHANQAH AKHTARI

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* IMPORTANT DETAILS *

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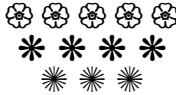
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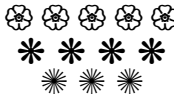


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OBSTACLES IN THE PATH OF REACHING ALLAH (ﷻ)

مُدَّ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ

ONE SUNNAH

The washing of the hands up to the wrists in *Wudhu* is a *Sunnah*, and this is the first and foremost thing to be done when making *Wudhu*. The reason for this is that after washing the hands, the next thing to do is to gargle the mouth. If the hands are not cleansed, the clean water that was placed in the hands to gargle the mouth will pick up the germs of the hand, and now that unhygienic water together with the germs will enter the mouth. In this way the object of *Wudhu* was cleanliness, but if the hands are unclean, from the very onset the object of *Wudhu* will be defeated.

In today's industrialized world, *Insan* has become very busy and engrossed in doing various types of works all the time. Many times in the process of his work, he touches some chemicals. And today we find that every product contains chemicals, in fact the irony of it is that the kitchen, which requires the most cleanliness, there are the most chemicals there. If these chemicals remain on the hand for some time, they can be extremely detrimental.

Similar is the condition with businessmen. Their hands are at all times occupied with something or the other, specifically the tellers. They are working with money all the time. They are touching the money of many different people with all its filth on it. Other people are working with paper and pen all the time. So if this continues for the whole day and the hands are not washed, very soon ones hands can develop skin diseases.

If at the time of *Salah*, the hands are not washed in *Wudhu*, there is a great possibility that a person may develop one of the following diseases:

- ❁ Loss of the colour of the skin and other skin related diseases,
- ❁ Prickly Heat ❁ Eczema
- ❁ Burning of the skin ❁ Fungal diseases etc.

These are some of the diseases that can be developed if the hands are not washed regularly, especially in these industrialized times. Many times unconsciously we also come in contact with chemicals. It is not only in a laboratory that chemicals are used, but chemicals have become so common that almost every product we are using, contains some type of chemical. So much so that the fruit we partake of have been sprayed with chemical also, therefore it has to be washed first. Even if we are just touching or holding that fruit, we are in contact with chemicals.

It is only the favour of Allah (ﷻ) that he has instructed us to make *Wudhu* for *Salah*. The first thing in the morning that we should do is the performing of *Wudhu* for *Fajr* or *Tahajjud*. In this way we will be washing our hands before using them for anything else. Then we will be performing *Wudhu* again for *Zuhr*, *Asr Maghrib* and *Esha*, washing our hands each time. So in this way we will be washing our hands five times a day, and this will be of great benefit to our health. And therefore it is encouraged that a person should make *Wudhu* for every *Salah*, even though he has *Wudhu*, because this entails great benefits.

From this, we can also understand the importance of the *Sunnah* of washing the hands before partaking of our meals. It is not only an act of reward, but there are great medical benefits too.

WORLDLY BENEFITS IN DEEN

Besides washing of the hands, if we look at the entire *Wudhu*, and the entire *Deen* at large, there are countless worldly benefits in it also. *Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ilyas Saheb* (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) has explained that even if the people of the West do not accept Islam, but if they practice on the *Sunnah* of Nabi (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) they will find what they are looking for; peace of mind and contentment of the heart, although there will be nothing for them in the *Akhirah*.

So *Deen* will benefit us in this *Dunya* also, and for the believers it is the way to *Jannah* also. What a beautiful and comprehensive *Deen* has Allah not given us!

AN INTERESTING FACT

A person once came to a *Khanqah* with the intention of raising some objections. He said to the *Shaikh* that *Fara'idh* (obligatory) acts are more important than the *Sunnah*, and the *Fara'idh* acts of *Wudhu* are, washing of the face, washing of the hands up to the elbows, making *Masah* of the head, and, washing of the feet. So why are the three *Sunnah* of washing the hands to the wrists, gargling the mouth and cleansing the nose prescribed first in *Wudhu* before the *Fara'idh* acts? The *Shaikh* replied: "This is such a simple question, ask one of my *Mureeds*, they will answer it." When the person asked the *Mureed*, he replied: "The water that a person is going to use to perform *Wudhu* has to have three qualities in it. There should be no odour, no colour and no taste in it. So to fulfil the *Fara'idh*, one has to test the water first. That is why the hands have to be washed first, to check the colour of the water. Then the mouth has to be gargled, to taste the water, and then the nose has to be cleansed with that water in order to smell it. Once you have tested the water in this way, you will be certain that it has qualified to be used for *Wudhu*."

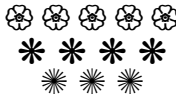
Then this person admitted and said: "I thought there was no knowledge in the *Khanqah*, but here I found the indepth knowledge that is even above the superficial knowledge.

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF THIS GREAT SUNNAH

Another benefit of washing the hands in *Wudhu* is that a type of ray is disseminated from the finger-tips. At the same time, a certain current is also discharged from the body all the time. When a connection takes place between the current and the ray, it beautifies the hands. Today people go for various types of treatments, and spend huge sums of money to beautify their skin etc. but this is a natural method, which we are unaware of.

So one should perform his *Wudhu* correctly according to the *Sunnah* to get maximum benefit out of it. Today unfortunately our *Wudhu* is such that we perform it very hastily, and generally a person performs *Wudhu* after going to the toilet. Now if he does not wash his hands properly, those very hands that were ought to be the source of hygiene and cleanliness, will become the source of germs entering the mouth.

May Allah (ﷻ) grant us the *Taufeeq* to perform our *Wudhu*, and every other *Amal* according to the *Sunnah* of NABI (ﷺ)
Ameen.



Introduction

We would like to discuss a few verses of the *Qur'aan*, upon which *Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi* (رحمة الله عليه) has based a complete talk filled with wisdom and guidance for us. This talk of *Hazrat* is also published in book form titled (Obstacles in the path of reaching Allah ﷻ). There are many obstacles that prevent one from reaching Allah (ﷻ) but *Moulana* says that Allah (ﷻ) has referred to them in these few verses of the *Qur'aan*, so that the *Salik* (one who is treading the path of reaching Allah ﷻ) can be alerted about the enemies that will encounter him in his journey. For example, someone is directing a person to a certain place, and together with the directions he warns him of the robbers at the station. Now this person knows that he should be on his guard there. Or he warns him of the speed traps at a certain point. Now the traveller will be alert at that point. So in a similar way Allah (ﷻ) is warning us here that in your path of reaching Me, there are two main points that you should be careful of, and these two are referred to as the titles. Beneath them there are plenty others as well, which each person can see and understand for himself.

THE TWO TYPES OF OBSTACLES

The first one is a **مُصِيبَةٌ** (A calamity or a hardship), and the second one is the opposite of this, i.e. **نِعْمَةٌ** (A bounty). Both these things, not in themselves, but when they surpass their respective limitations, they can lead a person off the path that reaches Allah (ﷻ). And these are two such conditions that are surrounding *Insan* at all times. *Insan* is being targeted with these two conditions one after the other. Some days a person is very happy because he makes a very good profit for that day, and other days things just do not seem to be going according to his plan, which makes him miserable and unhappy. So these are two conditions that every person goes through all the time.

WHAT IS MUSIBAH?

Allah (ﷻ) mentions in the *Qur'aan*:

﴿ مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ﴾

“No calamity befalls, but by the permission
of Allah (ﷻ) ...”

Whatever *Musibah* befalls a person, it is from Allah (ﷻ) but it is termed in the *Qur'aan* as *مُصِيبَةٌ* (calamity, hardship or difficulty) from our (*Insan's*) point of view. Anything that goes contrary to our nature is a *Musibah* for us, whether major or minor. For example, somebody passes away, a robbery takes place etc, all these things are calamities, and they are taking place all the time. But the most important thing that Allah (ﷻ) draws our attention towards is that all these things are happening only by His will.

A *Musibah* in itself is not a hindrance, but when it goes beyond its limits to such an extent that it affects a person so much that he goes into a depression, he begins to miss his *Salah*, he does not speak in a good way to people, and many times it reaches to this extent that he starts thinking of committing suicide, then in this case this *Musibah* has now become an obstacle and a hindrance. But this very *Musibah*, if one realises that it is from Allah (ﷻ), if one recites:

﴿ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنَا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴾

“Verily to Allah do we belong
and to Him is our return.”

It can take a person to Allah (ﷻ).

So Allah (ﷻ) has made the system of the world such that all the time these things will come in the way. There will be *Musibah* also on the road, as well as *Ni'mah*.

WHAT IS NI'MAH?

A *Ni'mah* is a bounty, which Allah (ﷻ) bestows to His servants. A *Ni'mah* can also be an obstacle in the path of reaching Allah (ﷻ) in such a way that if a person receives a *Ni'mah*, he becomes so much involved in it that he neglects his *Deen*. For example, a person purchases a new motor car. He gets so excited that he misses his *Salah* also. A person opens a new business and he is so involved there that he forgets about his *Zuhr* and *Asr Salah*. When he gets home he is so busy in counting his money that he misses his *Maghrib* and *Esha* also. So outwardly this is a *Ni'mah*, but it got him so involved that he forgot the commandments of Allah (ﷻ).

But this very *Ni'mah*, if a person acknowledges that it is from Allah (ﷻ) he makes *Shukr* to Allah (ﷻ) for it and he keeps the commandments of Allah in front of him all the time, it can take him further to Allah (ﷻ).

MUSIBAH AND NI'MAH IN THE PATH OF THE AMBIYA (ﷺ) AND THE AWLIYA

It is mentioned in a *Haidth*:

النَّاسِ بَلَاءُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَالْأَمْثَلُ ﴿١﴾

“Those who are put through the severest of trials are the *Ambiya*, then those who are the nearest to them (in piety) then those who follow.”¹

(Narrated in *Fat'hul Bari- commentary of Sahih Bukhari*, and in *Muslim Shareef*, with some variations in the words)

From here we see that the *Ambiya* (ﷺ) also have encounters with *Musibah* in their path. Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions in an *Ayah* of the *Qur'aan*:

رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمُ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً ﴿٣٨﴾

“And indeed We sent messengers before you
O Muhammad (ﷺ) and we made
for them wives and offspring... .”

(Ayah 38, Surah ArRa'd)

This *Ayah* of the *Qur'aan* shows us that the *Ambiya* (ﷺ) were also granted bounties of the world, they were also granted *Ni'mah* and this type of obstacles also came in their paths.

But what was the difference between their obstacles and ours? These obstacles did not affect their hearts.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رحمة الله عليه) has mentioned that when these two things surpass the limits and affect the heart, that is what is harmful.

AN EXAMPLE OF A WALI OF ALLAH (ﷻ)

A simple example is that of *Imam Abu Hanifah* (رحمة الله عليه) who was a very great businessman.

Once a report reached him that 40 ships containing his merchandise had sunk and that he had lost all his goods. On hearing this, he said: “*Alhamdulillah*.” After a while, he was told that the first report was incorrect. All the ships have docked safely. Again *Imam Abu Hanifah* (رحمة الله عليه) said: “*Alhamdulillah*.”

The people asked him: “In the first instance when you were afflicted with a *Musibah*, you said *Alhamdulillah*, Now that you were bestowed with a *Ni'mah*, again you said *Alhamdulillah*. Why was this?”

He replied: “My eyes were not on the goods, my eyes were on my heart. I was watching whether my heart was affected by the goods or by Allah (ﷻ). When I received the news that I lost the goods, was my heart still connected to Allah (ﷻ)? When I seen that it was still connected to Allah (ﷻ), I said **Alhamdulillah**. Then when I was told that the goods have arrived safely, I again looked at my heart. When I saw that the goods have not entered the heart, I again said **Alhamdulillah**.

This is not easy for us to practice on, we cannot even imagine these things, but let us keep it as an ideal in front of us. This is the level of **Imaan** that we should try to develop.

It should not be that if we lose a customer, we begin swearing everyone and our entire mood is upset. And when some good deal goes through, we become so happy that we forget our other obligations also, because these are the **Musibah** and **Ni'mah** that everyone faces in every facet of his life.

These are the two main impediments on this road of reaching Allah (ﷻ), Now under these two, each person can think for himself as to which obstacles encounter him in his way of life. Then he should be on the guard all the time.

A SOLUTION TO OVERCOME THESE OBSTACLES

The First Step

Allah Ta'aala further says:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ﴾

“And whosoever believes in Allah,
He guides his heart...”

In this part of the **Ayah** Allah (ﷻ) is making mention of those people who have strengthened their **Imaan** with Allah, that the **Musibah** will not affect them to such an extent that

they will lose heart, become depressed, think of committing suicide etc. so much so that people go to the extent of making statements like, “I performed *Salah* for so many years but it did not help me”

Such people will realize that Allah (ﷻ) is testing them, and that it was destined by Allah (ﷻ) to happen this way. Even if they are inflicted with *Musibah* one after the other, they will not say that they have been affected by *Jadu*; rather they will acknowledge that it is from Allah (ﷻ) and they will accept it that way.

The Second Step

Then the *Qur’aan* draws our attention to a very important aspect in a very short and concise way, It says:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ۗ ﴾

“Allah guides such a person’s heart...”

Hidayah coming into our hearts is the most important thing. For example, if a non-Muslim has love for Islam, and he even speaks in favour of Islam, but he does not accept Islam, it means that the *Hidayah* has not yet penetrated into his heart. But once *Hidayah* penetrates into the heart, then although it will not be easy for him to face his parents, to live in his society, a woman may have the fear that no one will be prepared to marry her, but then they will not care about anything, whether people accept him or reject him, they will accept Islam.

Similarly, for example, a person has the desire to grow his beard to a fist’s length according to the *Sunnah*, but he says that his wife will object or his friends will mock at him etc, so he does not do it. But when the *Hidayah* enters the heart, he will not care about what people are going to say, he will grow his beard to please Allah (ﷻ).

So Allah (ﷻ) will enter *Hidayah* into the heart when an effort is made on ones *Imaan*, and once this is done a person becomes strong. Then he can overcome these obstacles that come in his path,

The last part of the verse is:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝ ﴾

“And Allah has knowledge of everything.”

(*Ayah 11, Surah At Taghabun*)

Allah (ﷻ) is fully aware of all those things that are in every person’s heart and whatever every person is thinking about at every given time and moment.

WHERE TO START

This was a very high level of *Imaan* and training that Allah (ﷻ) spoke about in the above *Ayah*. Now Allah (ﷻ) teaches a method of starting our training to reach this high level. The following *Ayah* is the beginner’s course, which is very practical and very easy, and this is more for the *Muslim Ummah* in general. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ۚ ﴾

“And obey Allah and His Rasul...”

One who obeys Allah’s commandments and the teachings of Rasulullah (ﷺ) his *Imaan* will grow. Once a person’s *Imaan* grows, *Hidayah* will enter the heart, and once *Hidayah* enters the heart, a person will reach that level where if he is inflicted with the greatest calamity, he will take it as the decree and wish of Allah (ﷻ). If he receives the greatest of *Ni’mah*, he will acknowledge that it is from Allah (ﷻ) and it belongs to Him, thus he will be saved from pride. He will remain humble and he will pass his life normally.

Then the question arises that in which matters should one obey Allah (ﷻ) and His Rasul (ﷺ)? The *Qur'aan* did not mention this. The reason being that Allah (ﷻ) wishes to teach us thereby that Allah (ﷻ) and His Rasul (ﷺ) will have to be obeyed in all our matters.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Further in this *Ayah* Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ﴾

“But if you turn away then the duty of Our messenger is only to convey the message clearly.”

(*Ayah 12, Surah At Taghabun*)

This can be understood from an example of a person who goes to a doctor due to an illness. The doctor's duty is to diagnose the illness and prescribe the medication for it. Now it is left upon the patient to obtain the medication, to take it regularly and to follow the diet.

Similarly, Rasulullah (ﷺ) who was our spiritual doctor has diagnosed our spiritual illnesses. He has also prescribed the correct medication for it. Now the choice is ours whether we desire to be cured or not. If we do take the medication and cure ourselves spiritually, Rasulullah (ﷺ) will not benefit, the benefit will be for us only, and at the same time if we are not interested in curing ourselves, nor will Allah (ﷻ) be harmed, nor will His Nabi (ﷺ) be harmed in the least bit, we will have to bear all the harm.

THE RESULT

Those whose *Imaan* has now been perfected, they are aware at all times that:

﴿اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ﴾

“Allah! There is no deity save Him.”

Such people know well that whatever happens only happens by Allah (ﷻ). They know that Allah (ﷻ) is the sole doer of everything.

So these are the three stages. First one should obey Allah (ﷻ) and His Rasul (ﷺ). This will strengthen ones *Imaan*. Once the *Imaan* is strengthened, *Hidayat* will enter the heart. Once *Hidayat* enters the heart, one will be able to overcome these obstacles.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE ONE WHO HAS REACHED THIS STAGE?

﴿ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

“And in Allah alone therefore let the
believers place their trust.”

(Ayah 13, Surah At Taghabun)

Once a person has reached this stage, he depends and trusts fully upon Allah (ﷻ).

An example of such people in our times

Let us look at persons the like of *Shaikh Usamah bin Laden* and *Amirul Mu'mineen Mulla Muhammad Umar*. The whole world is standing against them but they are completely at ease because their connection is with Allah (ﷻ).

In the initial stages of the coalition war against Afghanistan, some *Ulama* went to meet *Mulla Muhammad Umar* in order to try and persuade him to hand over *Shaikh Usamah bin Laden* to America, but he refused. He said: “Our matter is with Allah (ﷻ). These *Ulama* were completely taken aback. Amongst them were those *Shaikhs* who were teaching *Bukhari* and other *Hadith* books, those who were teaching the chapter on *Imaan* for years, but they confessed that they were ashamed of themselves, and they admitted that this man has true *Imaan*.

The whole world including good decent people have been bought out by America, but bowing down is too far, **Mulla Muhammad Umar** has not even moved an inch in that direction. These are the people who have placed their total trust and reliance on Allah (ﷻ). They have been faced with a very difficult test, but Allah (ﷻ) tests us in smaller ways.

One of our friends informed me that he used his phone but the amount of usage was not deducted from him so he phoned the company to inform them. This is what **Imaan** is, and these are the minor forms of tests that we encounter. We should not think this to be a **Ni'mah** of Allah (ﷻ) and not inform the company of their error.

NI'MAH IS ALSO AN OBSTACLE AND TEST

In the next **Ayah** Allah (ﷻ) specifically warns us about the **Ni'mah** that may come our way. Normally when we hear of obstacles or tests, our minds go to **Musibah** and difficulties, therefore Allah (ﷻ) is drawing our attention specifically to this point that we should not think that only **Musibah** is a test and obstacle, but **Ni'mah** can also be the same. Allah (ﷻ) says:

نُوَّانٍ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ ﴿١٨﴾

“O believers, amongst your wives and
your children are your enemies...”

The wife and the children are great **Ni'mah** of Allah (ﷻ), yet at the same time they could be enemies also. How can they be enemies? When they demand **Haraam** things from you, when they want you to do **Haraam** things, or when you, out of love for them, do **Haraam** things, they have now become your enemies.

Once a person was stalking a bird. Nabi (ﷺ) happened to see this person. He commented:

شَيْطَانٌ يَتَّبِعُ شَيْطَانًا

“One Shaytan following another Shaytan.”

(Narrated by Ibn Majah)

This is what happens, that out of love for the children, the wife etc. a person gets so engrossed in trying to please them that he does not see whether his earning is *Halal* or *Haraam*. If they long for *Haraam* clothing, we buy it for them. If they want to go to *Haraam* places, we give them the money and allow them to go so that they do not get displeased. So, the wife and children are not enemies in themselves, but when they get a person involved in *Haraam*, then they become enemies.

A lesson from the above Hadith

Nabi (ﷺ) called this person a *Shaytan* probably because he had become very engrossed in this activity that there was a fear that he will miss his *Salah* or that he was negligent from the remembrance of Allah (ﷻ).

This is the reason that Islam does not encourage hunting and fishing, because there is a possibility that one may miss his *Deeni* obligations. And when one does miss these obligations, or if one starts behaving contrary to Islamic teachings then it becomes *Haraam* for him to indulge in such activities. Similar is the case with every other sport in Islam.

So in this *Ayah* Allah (ﷻ) is warning us that these are the *Ni'mah* that Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed us with, but when they surpass the limits and begin distracting us from Allah (ﷻ) then Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ﴾

“Therefore beware of them!”

Now we should be careful and be on our guard from them.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE OBSTACLES?

Then Allah (ﷻ) draws our attention to another very important lesson. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

“But if you pardon them, and overlook and forgive their faults, then verily Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most merciful.”

(Ayah 14, Surah At Taghabun)

The wife and the children will ask and desire for *Haraam* things. They will want to do wrong things, so how does one deal with such circumstances? The wife cannot be divorced if she asks for *Haraam*. The children cannot be chased out of the house if they are involved in some wrong activities, so what does the *Qur'aan* teach us? The *Qur'aan* says that we should pardon them, overlook their wrongs and forgive them. This is the attitude that should be adopted in such conditions.

On the one hand an effort of rectifying and *Islah* should also be made, and on the other hand kindness and softness should also be exercised. Try and inculcate the *Akhlaq* of Rasulullah (ﷺ) as declared in the *Qur'aan*:

﴿ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴾

“And verily you O Muhammad (ﷺ) are on an exalted standard of character.”

(Ayah 4, Surah Al Qalam)

The partners should be helpers to each other, if for example, the husband is weak when it comes to punctuality of *Salah* or any other matter, the wife should not demand a divorce, if the wife is weak in certain aspects, the husband must not divorce her. And these are not even grounds for divorce according to *Shariah*.

So on the one hand they could be our enemies also, but on the other hand Allah Ta'aala's command is that we should be compassionate and kind towards them also.

This is the tight rope that Allah (ﷻ) has given us to walk on in the *Dunya*, and he who is able to walk on this rope, **INSHA-ALLAH** he will be able to walk on the rope of *Siraat* on the Day of *Qiyamah*.

Now everyone can see for himself whether he is managing to hold on to his rope or whether he is falling off. According to that he will manage on the Day of *Qiyamah*. This *Dunya* is just an example of what is going to happen in the *Akhirah*. The amount of *Taufeeq* that a person gets in the *Dunya* to do good deeds, that is the amount of favours that Allah (ﷻ) will bestow on him in the *Akhirah*. Similarly the amount of depravation from doing good deeds in the *Dunya* will result in that amount of depravation in the *Akhirah*.

Then in the end of this verse Allah (ﷻ) speaks about His Mercy and forgiveness. One should take these words of the *Qur'aan* and reflect upon himself, that what punishments does he mete out against those who disobey Him. What will be his condition if Allah (ﷻ) decides to mete out those same punishments against him? For example, out of anger with his wife, many times a person finds it easy to say to her; "Get out of my life, I do not need you, there are many other women in the world" etc. He should remember that it is easy for Allah (ﷻ) also to say to him: "I do not need you, I have many servants who worship Me." What will be his condition then?

What will be ones position if Allah (ﷻ) has to deprive him of his *A'maal*, his *Akhlaaq*, his Islam, his sanity, his eyesight etc?

So one should not think that he has the right to treat people the way it pleases him. He should be kind, as every human being is prone to commit mistakes, like he does commit mistakes himself too. But together with that he should make the effort of making *Islaah* and rectifying things. This is not a very easy thing to do, but this is the test from Allah (ﷻ).

ANOTHER OBSTACLE IN THE FORM OF A NI'MAH

In this *Ayah* Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ﴾

“Your wealth and your children are but a trial..”

(*Ayah 15, Surah At Taghabun*)

In the previous *Ayah* Allah (ﷻ) spoke about one's spouse and children, and in this *Ayah* Allah (ﷻ) speaks of one's wealth and children.

These are the three dangerous and great *Fitnahs* that every person has his encounters with daily, but here *Fitnah* is not in the meaning of 'hardship' or 'calamity', here it is in the meaning of 'tests' and 'trials.'

These three *Fitnahs* will come in a person's path of reaching Allah, and every person is involved with these three things all the time.

Why were the children mentioned two times?

Children are mentioned in both places because a person works more for his children. Many times people know that they will not live for very long yet we will find them working very hard in this *Dunya*. They say: "I am working for my children, I do not need to work for myself anymore." Children are such that they can lead a person completely astray; therefore Allah (ﷻ) spoke about it both times.

One should take special precautions with regard to his children. If children are not brought up correctly from childhood, then when they get older they begin demanding unislamic clothing, they desire to go to wrong places, they get caught in wrong company etc. and now we try to stop them, but then it is too late. From the beginning it was our duty to see to their healthy Islamic upbringing and *Tarbiyah*.

My *Usthad Hafiz Salloo Saheb* (رحمة الله عليه) used to say that if you plant weeds how can you expect flowers to grow?

When a tree is young and it grows crooked, and if it is ignored then, once its roots are well established and firm, how can that tree be made straight? Similarly, when children are small and they are not given an Islamic upbringing, we are allowing their roots to get well established and firm in a crooked way. Then afterwards we complain about them. This will not help. We will have to keep the roots straight from the very beginning, but again, as Allah (ﷻ) has taught us, with kindness and compassion.

Whilst making *Tarbiyah* of the child, a person should not forget that he too was a child once. He too made mistakes. He should not expect his children to be born-*Walis*. He should not beat the child up in order to build the child's character. Nor should a person try to build the child just by commands, it is not a list of do's and don'ts, it is a question of love, and love requires time. We have to spend valuable time with our children. Today we do not have time for our children, yet we have time to watch our sports, we have time for our business etc.

In order to bring up children, a person has to turn his blood to water, i.e. he has to go to that extent of *Mujahadah* to bring them up correctly.

HIDAYAH IS IN THE HANDS OF ALLAH (ﷻ)

Then a person may say that he has tried his best, but he is not in control of his wife and children's hearts. He cannot turn their hearts. So Allah (ﷻ) replies to this in this way:

﴿ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ ﴾

“So fear Allah as much as you can...”

What is within a person's capacity, that is what he is responsible for.

Here we learn an important lesson, and that is that we should not try to become Gods ourselves. We should not think that *Hidayah* lies in our hands. Even our own *Hidayah* does not lie in our hands. It is narrated in a *Hadith*:

بَيْنَ أَصْبُعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ يُقَلِّبُهَا كَيْفَ شَاءَ

“Undoubtedly all hearts are between the two fingers of the fingers of Allah, He turns them however He wishes.”

(Narrated in Sunan at Tirmidhi; Ibn Maja; Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal etc. with slight variations in the words)

Of course Allah (ﷻ) does not possess fingers like that of *Insan*, but this *Haidh* means that Allah (ﷻ) has full control of every person's heart. A person can be the greatest *Wali* of Allah (ﷻ) when he goes to sleep at night, and he can be the biggest *Shaytan* when he wakes up in the morning, and vice versa.

So guidance and *Hidayah* is not in our hands, yes, the effort of *Hidayah* is in our hands. Who can be a greater preacher than Nabi (ﷺ)? Yet in Nabi (ﷺ)'s time also the whole world did not accept Islam, it is the system of Allah (ﷻ) that *Batil* will always be there. When it is said that Islam will rein

in the world, it does not mean that everyone will be Muslim. The *Kuffar* will also be there, but Islam will be the superior religion.

AN IMPORTANT REMEDY FOR THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL; SPENDING IN THE PATH OF ALLAH (ﷺ)

Further Allah (ﷻ) says:

وَاسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ ط

“And listen and obey, and spend in charity:
that is better for you...”

A very important aspect for *Islah-e-Nafs* (purification of the soul) is to spend in the path of Allah (ﷻ). Spending in the path of Allah (ﷻ) is for every person. Commonly we think that it is only for the rich. We think that if we are in debts, we do not have to spend in Allah’s path, but till a person does not spend, his *Islah* cannot be made.

If a person cannot afford five thousand or five hundred rands for example, he should give five rands in the path of Allah (ﷻ). No amount is small in the eyes of Allah (ﷻ), provided it is given sincerely. We should not be deceived, that five rands is such a minimal amount, how will it help? When a person cannot afford a large sum of money, *Shaytan* deceives him and makes him believe that the amount is too small, therefore he should rather not spend in the path of Allah (ﷻ), and when a person intends giving a large sum, *Shaytan* makes him believe that if he parts with such a large sum, he will develop pride within himself, therefore he should not give. So the amount does not matter to Allah (ﷻ). So much so that it is mentioned in the *Hadith*:

ق. بعدل تمره من كسب طيب، ولا يصعد إلى الله
ب، فان الله يتقبلها بيمينه، ثم يربها لصاحبها كما
يربى احد كم فلوه، حتى تكون مثل جبل

“He who gives in charity the equivalent to a date from his pure earnings, and only pure earnings are accepted by Allah, then Allah will accept this from him with His right hand. Thereafter Allah will multiply it for the giver the way one of you would multiply his horses, until it becomes equivalent to a mountain,”

(Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

So one should give whatever is in one's capacity to give. *Hazrat Moulana Shah Abrarul Haq Saheb* (رحمة الله عليه) says that the *Ulama* and teachers who teach in *Madrasahs* should also contribute towards that *Madrasah*.

So from this *Ayah* we learn the importance of spending in the path of Allah (ﷻ) and this is not *Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi* (رحمة الله عليه)'s *Bayan*, it is the *Bayan* of Allah (ﷻ).

GREED AND MISERLINESS

After this Allah (ﷻ) speaks of another very important aspect. Allah (ﷻ) says:

نُيُوقُ شَحِّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ○ ﴿١٦﴾

“And whosoever is saved from his own greed, then they are the successful ones.”

(*Ayah 16, Surah At Taghabun*)

This *Ayah* points to two important aspects. Firstly, to the fact that every person has got greed within himself, and secondly, to the fact that it is only Allah (ﷻ) who can save a person from this disease, therefore Allah (ﷻ) did not say that, you saved yourself from greed through your effort, rather Allah (ﷻ) said that, whosoever is saved. This means that every person's *Islaah* (spiritual purification) depends entirely on the wish and decision of Allah (ﷻ).

Nevertheless, greed and miserliness is a very terrible spiritual disease. The cure for this disease is that one should spend in the path of Allah (ﷻ), even if the thought comes to his mind that he is spending for name and fame, even if he dislikes spending and thinks that he has to spend open heartedly in order to attain reward, then too he should force himself to spend. *INSHA-ALLAH* he will be brought to such a stage where Allah (ﷻ) will purify his heart. Allah (ﷻ) will remove this disease of greed from his heart, as we see in the above *Ayah*. Then regarding such a person or such people Allah (ﷻ) says that they are the ones who will attain success.

Let us take a lesson from our *Shaikh* (دامت برکاتہم), from *Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Saheb* (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) and all our pious elders. People present them with gifts etc, but let us see what large amounts they spend on the poor and needy also. We should not think that they are only receiving, but they are also spending.

In the next *Ayah* Allah (ﷻ) further stresses on this point. Let us ponder over the way in which Allah (ﷻ) has put it forward:

A REMEDY FOR GREED AND MISERLINESS

إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضْعِفْهُ
لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ۝

“If you lend to Allah a good loan, He will double it for you, and He will forgive you. And Allah is Most ready to appreciate and to reward, Most Forbearing.”

(Ayah 261, Surah Al Baqarah)

Allah (ﷻ) has granted us everything, so what does this **Ayah** mean? What loan is Allah (ﷻ) asking from us? A loan is such a thing that has to be repaid. So by illustrating in this way Allah (ﷻ) is giving us a guarantee that He will definitely repay us. And if we give Allah (ﷻ) a good loan, how well will He not repay us? He will repay us on time and He will repay us with extra also, which according to the *Qur'aan* will be multiplied at least seven hundred times. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ط ﴾

“Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills.”

(Ayah 261, Surah Al Baqarah)

Seven hundred is not the limit; Allah (ﷻ) will increase much more than that for whomsoever He wishes.

So if a person spends in the path of Allah (ﷻ), Allah (ﷻ) will not only increase and multiply it for him, but more than that, Allah (ﷻ) will forgive his sins also.

And Allah (ﷻ) is شكور Allah (ﷻ) is that Being Who is the most Thankful. Allah (ﷻ) does not have to thank us, but He is teaching us this great quality of gratefulness.

It is like a parent who gives his child some sweets, then asks the child just for one sweet from there. The sweets do not belong to the child, nor is the parent in need of that one sweet, but the parent is doing so in order to teach the child generosity, and in order to remove the evil quality of miserliness from the child.

So this is exactly what Allah (ﷻ) is doing. He is the Being Who has given us everything, and now He is asking us for a little from there. Further, Allah (ﷻ) guarantees its repayment. He takes it as a loan upon Himself.

Together with that Allah (ﷻ) is **حليم** also. He is extremely tolerant.

THREE QUALITIES OF ALLAH (ﷻ)

Further Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

“(Allah is) The All-knower of the unseen and seen,
the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”

(Ayah 18, Surah At Taghabun)

Allah (ﷻ) is that Being Who has knowledge of those things that are unseen to us. As far as Allah (ﷻ) is concerned, there is nothing unseen for Him. For Allah (ﷻ) there is no **غيب**.

From this we can also understand the kindness of Allah (ﷻ). He does not describe Himself according to His level, but according to our level, because for Allah (ﷻ) there is no **غيب** according to us there is **غيب**, therefore He used the word in order to make us understand.

Similarly, Allah (ﷻ) has knowledge of that which is seen and visible also.

The second quality of Allah Ta’aala, which is mentioned here, is **العزیز** (The All- Mighty). The meaning of **العزیز** is:

على كل شيء، ولا يغلبه شيء عن استعمال قدرته

*“Allah is that Being Who has power over everything,
and nothing can prevent Allah (ﷻ)
from using His powers.”*

The third quality that Allah (ﷻ) mentions here is **الحكيم** (The Most Wise). Every act of Allah (ﷻ) is based totally on wisdom.

CONCLUSION

So when this is the case, then a person should know well that any obstacles that he encounters, whether in the form of **Musibah** or **Ni'mah**, it is through the divine wisdom of Allah.

Our **Shaikh** illustrated this to us in this way that once a great **Alim** took **Bayat** at the hands of **Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi** (رحمة الله عليه). He was spending some time in the company of **Hazrat Thanwi** (رحمة الله عليه) and he received news that his family was going through difficulties at home. His children had taken ill and they were in financial problems etc. Hearing this put the **Alim** in great distress. **Hazrat Thanwi** (رحمة الله عليه) said to him that since you are a man of logic, I will explain this condition to you from a logical point of view. He explained thus: There can be only one of four conditions to any difficulty that faces a person.

- ❁ **The first one is that the total benefit of it is for Allah (ﷻ) and there is no benefit for Insan. This is impossible because what benefit will Allah (ﷻ) receive in harming any of His servants?**
- ❁ **The second condition is that Allah (ﷻ) benefits 50% and Insan benefits 50%. This is also impossible because conditions cannot benefit or harm Allah (ﷻ).**
- ❁ **The third is that there is no benefit for anyone. This is also impossible because Allah (ﷻ) is All-Wise. He does not do anything without any benefit.**
- ❁ **The one and the only form that is possible, is that 100% benefit is for Insan.**

The problem is that we are very short sighted and we cannot bear these difficulties. Let us take a lesson from the **Ambiya** (عليه السلام). Every Nabi had to go through difficulties whilst making **Tabligh** of the **Deen**, If we do a little **Tabligh** and somebody criticizes us, we cannot take it. Today we feel that we have to be very popular with everyone. Nobody should even think or speak evil about us. If this is the case, it implies that there is a religious deficiency in us. The **Sahabah** (رضي الله عنهم) were such that if someone would not be criticized they would regard him as a **Mudahin**, as a person who is not speaking the truth in **Deen**, and as a person who is trying to please everyone.*

So having enemies is a natural thing. There is nothing wrong with that. Yes, we should see who our enemies are. If good people are our enemies then that is a problem. Let us not make Allah (ﷻ) our enemy, let us not make His Rasul (ﷺ) our enemy, and let us not make the pious people our enemies. Besides them if a person has other enemies, it is a natural thing.

* We could not trace this back to any **Sahabi** but we have found it to be a saying **Hazrat Sufyan Thowri** (رحمة الله عليه) (a **Tabi'i**) as mentioned in FAZA'IL A'MAAL:

“Whoever is popular with his relations and neighbours, we suspect him to be compromising in preaching the true teachings of religion.”

(See Faza'il A'maal, Virtues of Tabligh)

So in these few **Ayat** Allah (ﷻ) has explained such important aspects of our lives to us, which is not only for a **Sufi** or one who is in **Tasawwuf**, but it is for every person, if a person is in **Deen** already, Allah (ﷻ) shows a method by which he can ascend to a higher level. If a person is still coming close to **Deen**, Allah (ﷻ) has explained a method by which it will be easy for him to draw closer to **Deen** and then to eventually reach the higher level. So in these verses the ailment has been diagnosed, the treatment has been given and the treatment has been simplified also for the benefit of every person.

A FINAL WORD OF ADVICE

The life of this world is very short, and Allah (ﷻ) has not granted us this life merely to earn our livelihood. If we make the worries of this *Dunya* our worries then our entire lives will revolve around these worries, like, in the olden days in the eastern countries, people used to grind their wheat by placing it on the ground. In the middle they used to place a pole and tie an ox to the pole. The ox would walk round and round the pole the whole day, as it could not go anywhere else. So at the end of the day if the ox were to be asked: "Where did you go?" If it could reply, it would say: "Nowhere. If it were asked: "What did you do?" It would say: "Nothing. So in the same way our entire lives will pass and we will achieve nothing, we will reach nowhere. Therefore, our worry and concern should be to please Allah (ﷻ) and to rectify and purify our souls, if we do this, then the worries of the world will be sidelines and Allah (ﷻ) will arrange for it. If we keep our objective of life in mind, we will see that the needs and the worries of the *Dunya* will just fade away, Allah (ﷻ) will take care of it, and we will achieve our goal, we will become *Insan* and we will leave this world not only as a true *Ummati* but as a real *Insan* also.

May Allah guide everyone to righteousness and accept us for His *Deen*,

Ameen.

ہم ایسے رہے یا کہ ویسے رہے
وہاں دیکھنا ہے کہ کیسے رہے